CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF GROWING GREAT PARKS

Oakland County Parks

NEWS RELEASE

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Catalpa Oaks partially reopens with expanded play, fitness and gathering spaces

Major improvements bring new opportunities for recreation close to home; more to come in 2027

SOUTHFIELD, MI – Oct. 19, 2026 – Oakland County Parks is welcoming visitors back to Catalpa Oaks County Park following approximately 15 months of construction that has transformed the 24-acre neighborhood park with expanded recreation opportunities, improved accessibility and new green infrastructure.

Residents joined Oakland County Parks staff and local officials Oct. 17 for a first look at the improvements, which are designed to make Catalpa Oaks a more welcoming, comfortable and versatile destination for people of all ages and abilities.

The revitalization includes an expanded universally accessible playground, improved accessible pathways, shaded gathering and seating areas, an accessible plaza, a second picnic pavilion and new outdoor fitness equipment.

Additional improvements include a newly paved parking lot, upgrades to recreation fields and green stormwater infrastructure designed to better manage rainfall and runoff while addressing longstanding drainage challenges.

The improvements build on existing park features, including the 0.8-mile perimeter walking loop and Vincent Gregory Pavilion.

“Some of the most important investments we can make are in the places people use as part of their everyday lives,” said Oakland County Parks Director Chris Ward. “Catalpa Oaks is about creating more opportunities for children to play, neighbors to connect and people of all ages to be active and enjoy the outdoors close to home. That’s what building a stronger countywide system of parks looks like - investing in the communities where people live.”

“Every family deserves a great park close to home,” said Oakland County Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles, vice chair of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. “These improvements give Southfield residents more places for children to play, families to gather and neighbors to connect. Catalpa Oaks is an investment in the everyday quality of life of this community, and that’s something residents will benefit from for generations.”

The fitness court at Catalpa Oaks is an approximately 1,400 square foot outdoor bodyweight circuit training center that provides a full-body workout to adults of all abilities. With seven functional fitness zones, the court can be used in many ways, including for classes and informal exercising. The fitness court was funded in part by a $50,000 partnership between Oakland County Parks, Priority Health and the National Fitness Campaign.

“We are excited to have Oakland County join us in the journey to improve health and wellness as we work to make a powerful and long-lasting impact on health outcomes and happiness by building healthy communities across America,’’ said Mitch Menaged, founder of National Fitness Campaign. “The addition of the outdoor Fitness Court®, along with digital wellness programming, demonstrates a tremendous commitment to the health and wellbeing within the community.”

“At Priority Health, we believe everyone deserves access to resources that support a healthy lifestyle,” said Nick Gates, president of Priority Health. “By partnering with the City of Southfield and the National Fitness Campaign, we’re helping make fitness more accessible while supporting the health and well-being of Southfield residents through the new Priority Health Fitness Court.”

While portions of Catalpa Oaks are reopening, work continues on the recreation fields. The fields will remain closed while the new turf becomes established and are expected to open in spring 2027. A formal ribbon-cutting celebration is also planned for next spring.

Originally acquired from the City of Southfield in 2007 and dedicated as an Oakland County park in 2012, Catalpa Oaks has become an important neighborhood recreation destination. The revitalization is part of Oakland County Parks’ Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan, supported by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and the Oakland County Parks Capital Improvement Program.

The investment also advances Mission 26, Oakland County Parks’ long-term vision for a more connected, accessible and resilient countywide park system, with an emphasis on improving existing parks and expanding recreational opportunities throughout Oakland County.

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Photo cutlines

Catalpa Oaks #1: Southfield Councilwoman Yolanda Haynes tries out the new fitness court at Catalpa Oaks County Park. Photo courtesy of Oakland County Parks.

Catalpa Oaks #2: Residents joined Oakland County Parks staff and local officials Oct. 17 for a first look at improvements made at Catalpa Oaks County Park. Photo courtesy of Oakland County Parks.

Catalpa Oaks #3: Oakland County Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles, vice chair of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, spoke to the crowd about the improvements at Catalpa Oaks County Park. Also pictured is Oakland County Commissioner Linnie Taylor; Oakland County Commissioner Ann Erickson Gault, Executive Committee

Member of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission; and Southfield City Administrator Frederick Zorn. Photo courtesy of Oakland County Parks.